

## Notes from Upper Rio Grande Basin Water Operations Review Interdisciplinary NEPA Team Meeting; December 13, 2001; 1:00 PM; Corps of Engineers Conference Room, Albuquerque

### *In attendance:*

Neal Ackerly, Dos Rios/Corps

Scott Anderholm, USGS

Carolyn Brumfield, Corps

Ellen Dietrich, SAIC/Corps

Darrell Eidson, Corps

Richard Fike, Corps

Susan Goodan, SAIC/Corps

Rhea Graham, NMISC

Steve Kolk, USBR

Rob Leutheuser

Bill Liebfried, SWCA/NMISC


Clay Mathers, Corps

Gary Rutherford, Corps

Julie Tsatsaros, NMED/SWQB

- ❖ Steve Kolk chaired the meeting. Representatives from the Aquatic Systems, Cultural Resources, Water Quality, GIS, Geomorphology, and Land Use (etc.) Technical Teams attended the meeting. Steve asked the group to review the notes from the last meeting. No comments or edits were provided by anyone in attendance.
- ❖ Steve reviewed the agenda and draft notes from the last Steering Committee meeting. He described the concept of using playing cards to explain the alternatives to the Steering Committee and the public. He reviewed the fact cards that describe the No Action Alternative, and summarized the use of the cards that represent changes to operations at specific facilities for the draft alternatives. Steve also reviewed the comments and recommendations on the alternatives and the plans for the public meetings that were made by the Steering Committee.
- ❖ Steve led a discussion of the plans for the public meetings that will be held to get feedback on the draft alternatives. The meetings will begin in January in Las Cruces and El Paso and will be scheduled in the same general areas as the public scoping meetings, but in reverse order, moving from south to north. **Technical teams were asked to decide among themselves if they should attend and discuss with the Project Managers.**
  - Meeting dates and locations are listed below. The later ones are tentative.
    - 1/15: Las Cruces
    - 1/16: El Paso
    - 2/5: Truth or Consequences
    - 2/6: Socorro
    - 3/19: Albuquerque
    - 3/20: Santa Fe
    - 4/16: Española
    - 4/17: Abiquiu
    - 5/14-16: Taos and Alamosa


- The group made recommendations to improve the message of the purpose and goals of the Water Operations Review to the public.
  - Acknowledge that operations at El Vado will be modeled and evaluated but that the JLA have limited influence in changing these operations.
  - Clearly identify the issues that relate to the Purpose and Need statement.
  - Stress to the public that evaluating the effects of water operations provides a useful foundation for understanding the Rio Grande system.
  - Stress to the public that there will be a section of the EIS to describe other actions that cannot be evaluated under this project but that will be passed along to the appropriate agency for consideration under a different effort. Explain that some recommendations will be held for later consideration because the methods and tools for the evaluation have yet to be developed. It was agreed that this section might be one of the most important in the EIS.
  - Project Managers should be prepared to answer questions on water supply and demand, even though this will not be evaluated under the Water Operations Review. One recommended response is that outcomes of the Review have the potential to make more efficient use of water in the system.
  - Project Managers should listen to the recommendations for alternatives given at the meetings, but should not judge them at the meetings.

 ➤ **Technical teams should provide additional information on alternatives, if they have any, before the Project Managers finalize their presentation for the public meetings.**

❖ Other discussion

- Aquatic Systems Technical Team—Bill Liebfried
  - The team would like to know how Chapters 3 and 4 will be organized, by reach or by resource. Their team recognizes that some reaches will have little information and no impacts to discuss. Recommendations from the group for Chapter 3 include:
    - Begin with a geomorphic description of each reach.
    - Each resource team should describe the resource and the reaches that are most important to that resource.
    - Use tables to identify the relationships between the reaches and pertinent resources.
- GIS Technical Team—Clay Mathers
  - Clay cautioned that the later stages of development of the EIS will require a significant amount of time and resources for the synthesis of data. He is concerned that this will require as much time and effort as the development of URGWOM at the beginning and would like the Project Managers to consider now how this will be accomplished, including co-locating staff to conduct the modeling, data integration, and analysis. He advised that monthly meetings will not be enough to accomplish this.

- He also raised concerns, further explained by Ellen Dietrich, that while many technical team members believe that Flo-2D modeling will be conducted on the Rio Chama below Abiquiu to enable technical team impact analyses, the digital data needed to create the modeling grid are not now available. It may be possible to obtain LIDAR data along the Chama, but the resources and a contract would need to be developed immediately so the flight could be completed before leaves come out in the spring. Clay suggested that it might be possible to get other agencies to contribute funds to the effort because they would be interested in obtaining the data, but the Project Managers must act quickly to accomplish this.

 ❖ **The next Interdisciplinary NEPA Team meeting will be held at the Corps on January 10 at 1:00 p.m.**